

STRANGE

TALES



10¢

FROM
THE

CRYPT



THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S TALE

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A "LIVING CORPSE"? DEAR READER? DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE DEAD CAN BE REVIVED? THAT THEY CAN BE MADE TO LIVE, ONCE AGAIN? THEN READ THIS STORY...ONE OF THE BEST OF MY TERROR-TALES THAT I KEEP HERE IN THE CRYPT! IT IS THE STORY OF JAMES COOPER...AND HOW HE CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD! I CALL IT...

A SHOCKING WAY TO DIE!

ELDSFELD



MY STORY BEGINS IN A COURTROOM, CROWDED WITH THE CURIOUS WHO HAVE COME TO WATCH A CONVICTED MURDERER BE SENTENCED TO DEATH...

...AND IT IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS COURT, JAMES COOPER, THAT YOU BE SENT TO STATE PRISON, AND THERE BE ELECTROCUTED ON THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 7TH... AND MAY THE LORD HAVE MERCY ON YOUR SOUL!

NO...
NO!



THE EVENING PAPERS CARRIED BLARING HEADLINES OF JAMES COOPER'S THREAT...

EVENING BUC
CONVICTED MURDERER
SWEARS REVENGE!!
TO RETURN FROM THE DEAD!
JURY MEMBERS AMUSED!

COOPER TO DIE
NIGHT OF NOV. 7TH.



BUT A FEW NIGHTS LATER, IN A RAMSHACKLED HOUSE OUTSIDE OF TOWN...

FOR THE RIGHT PRICE, GENTLEMEN, I CAN BRING JAMES COOPER BACK FROM THE DEAD... REVIVE HIM AFTER HE HAS BEEN ELECTROCUTED!

WHAT? YOU CAN MAKE HIM LIVE AGAIN?



I'VE BEEN FRAMED! YOU'RE ALL AGAINST ME! BUT... I'LL GET EVEN! I'LL COME BACK... AND I'LL GET YOU... ALL OF YOU! I'LL HAVE REVENGE! YOU'LL SEE! I...

LET'S GO, COOPER!



THAT IS CORRECT! I HAVE BEEN EXPERIMENTING ON ELECTROCUTION DEATHS FOR MANY YEARS, AND HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL WITH ANIMALS! I HAVE LONGED TO EXPERIMENT ON A HUMAN... THAT IS WHY I'VE CONTACTED YOU!



AND SO... A FEW DAYS BEFORE JAMES COOPER WAS TO DIE IN THE ELECTRIC CHAIR... HE HAD A VISITOR IN THE DEATH HOUSE...

WHAT DO YOU THINK, JIMMY? WANT TO CHANCE IT?

OF COURSE, YOU FOOL! WHAT HAVE I GOT TO LOSE! PAY HIM HIS MONEY!



THE DEAL WAS MADE, AND ON THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 7TH, AT THE APPOINTED HOUR...

ALL RIGHT, COOPER! LET'S GO!

SURE, GUARD! SURE!



DOWN THE LONG CORRIDOR TO THE LITTLE GREEN DOOR, THE CONVICTED MAN... FLANKED BY THE WARDEN AND A GUARD... SLOWLY MADE HIS WAY... DOWN THE "LAST MILE..."



THE HEAVY DOOR SWUNG OPEN! INSIDE, SAT REPORTERS ASSIGNED TO COVER THE EXECUTION...

LOOK, JOE! THE JERK'S SMILING!

WAIT! HE'LL ORACK! THEY ALWAYS DO!



OUTSIDE THE DARK GREY WALLS, IN THE PRISON YARD, STOOD A BLACK HEARSE! A FACE PEERED OUT FROM BEHIND DRAWN CURTAINS...



WHILE WITHIN, THE PRISONER WAS BEING STRAPPED INTO THE LETHAL CHAIR...

HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE AFRAID!

I DON'T GET IT!



ELECTRODES WERE FASTENED INTO PLACE...

ALL SET, WARDEN!

ALL RIGHT, MR. EXECUTIONER!

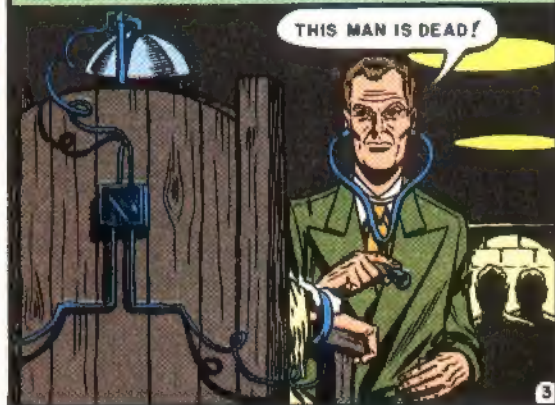


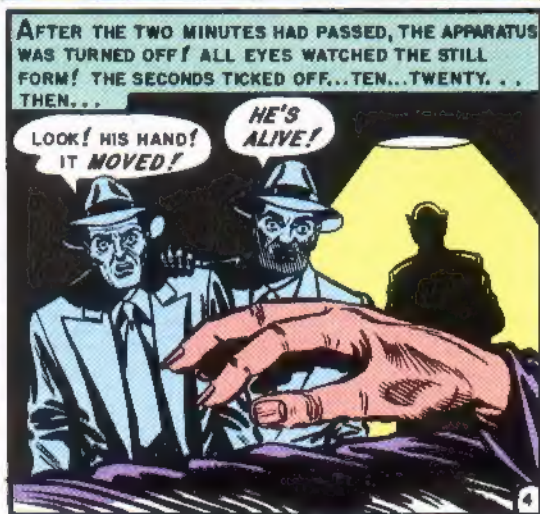
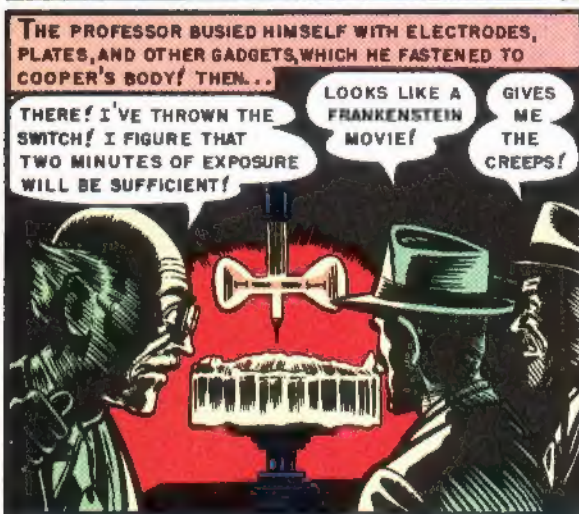
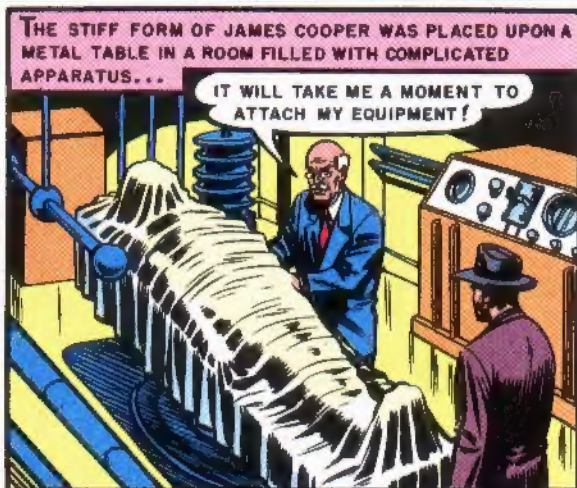
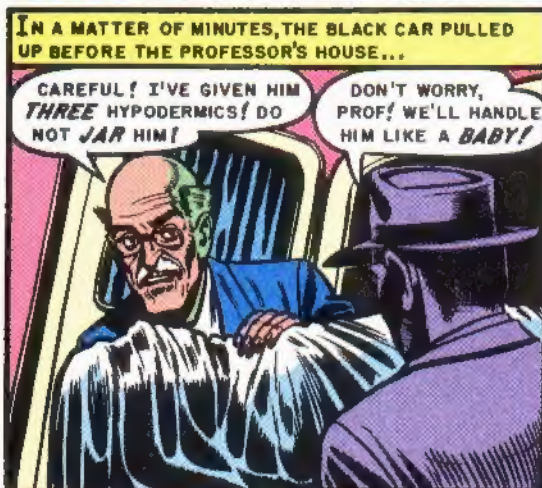
A SMALL MAN STEPPED TO A CONTROL PANEL AND PULLED A SWITCH...



THE STENCH OF BURNING FLESH AND SINGED HAIR FILLED THE ROOM AS THE LIGHTS DIMMED! AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, A DOCTOR STEPPED FORWARD AND PLACED HIS STETHOSCOPE ON JAMES COOPER'S HEART...

THIS MAN IS DEAD!





SLOWLY THE DRAPED FIGURE STIRRED...THEN SAT UP! THE SHEET FELL AWAY AND...

CRIPES! HIS FLESH IS ALL BURNED!

CERTAINLY! HE HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO A VERY HIGH AMPERAGE CHARGE!

HE LOOKS... HORRIBLE!

DO NOT WORRY! WITH PROPER MEDICATION, HE WILL HEAL!

WHA... WHAT... HAPPENED?

TAKE IT EASY, JIMMY! YOU'VE HAD A ROUGH TIME!

I...I REMEMBER, NOW! THE CHAIR... I WAS ELECTROCUTED!

THIS IS THE PROFESSOR I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT, JIMMY! HE REVIVED YOU!

GIVE ME A GUN!

WHA...?

YOU HEARD ME! GIVE ME A GUN!

NO! DON'T!

DON'T GIVE HIM ANYTHING UNTIL I'VE HAD TIME TO DETERMINE WHETHER HIS BRAIN HAS BEEN DAMAGED!

LOOEY! YOU HEARD ME!

SURE, BOSS! SURE! HERE!

THANKS FOR THE FAVOR, PROF! HERE'S MY PAYOFF!

JIMMY! DON'T YOU...

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT, JIMMY! HE WAS GONNA FIX UP YOUR BURNS!

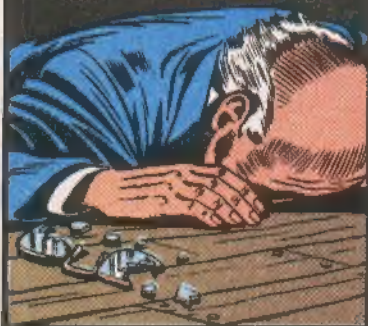
DON'T NEED IT! NOW... I'M GONNA GET THAT JURY!

WAIT, JIMMY! DON'T DO NOTHING FOOLISH! FORGET THE JURY! THEY JUST DID THEIR DUTY!

I SWORE REVENGE! NOW I'M GOING TO GET IT!

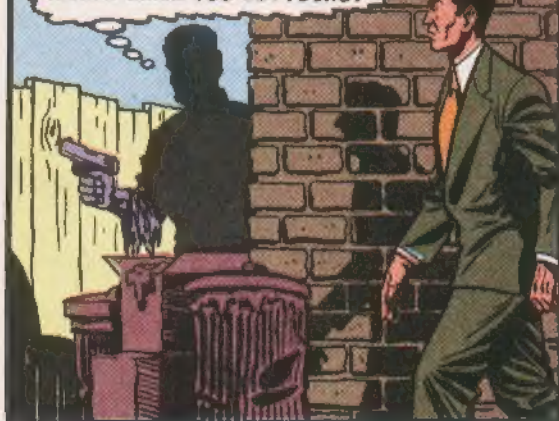
HE...HE'S DIFFERENT! HE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ALL THERE!

MAYBE...WHAT THE PROF SAID... ABOUT HIS BRAIN BEING DAMAGED...



LATE THE NEXT NIGHT, ON A DARK STREET...

ALL RIGHT, JUROR NUMBER ONE... HERE'S WHERE YOU GET YOURS!



WHA...? WHO IS IT? I...NO...NO! COOPER...



AND THE NEXT MORNING...

THE MORNING
STAR-COMET-PRESS

JUROR IN COOPER CASE FOUND MURDERED! FEARED VICTIM OF GANGLAND RETALIATION...

STRANGE MARKS ON THROAT SAID TO BE BURNED FLESH PRINTS!

MEANWHILE, AT THE COOPER GANG'S HIDE-OUT...

IT'S THE BOSS!

GOOD LORD! LOOK AT HIM!

HE LOOKS WORSE THAN YESTERDAY!

WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT?



IT WAS TRUE! JAMES COOPER'S BURNED AND SEARED BODY *DID* LOOK WORSE! IT SEEMED TO BE...*ROTTING*!

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT, JIMMY! THEY'VE TURNED THE HEAT ON...

WHO CARES! I'LL GET THEM! EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM!



AGAIN THAT NIGHT, JAMES COOPER STALKED A VICTIM...

THAT TAKES CARE OF YOU, JUROR NUMBER TWO!



AND THE PAPERS PLAYED IT UP...

STAR NEWS

SECOND JUROR FOUND MURDERED!
POLICE ROUNDING UP EVERY KNOWN MEMBER OF COOPER GANG!

COURTROOM PROMISE TO RETURN IS RECALLED!

THE POLICE GRILLED SUSPECT AFTER SUSPECT! MEANWHILE THE OTHER JURORS WERE GIVEN POLICE PROTECTION...

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I'LL TALK... I'LL TALK! IT'S COOPER! HE'S ALIVE!

YOU'RE LYING!



YEAH? THEN WHY DON'T YOU LOOK IN HIS GRAVE FOR HIS BODY!

HOGAN! GET THE NECESSARY PAPERS! WE'LL TAKE THIS STOOLE'S SUGGESTION!



BY COURT ORDER, THE GRAVE OF JAMES COOPER WAS OPENED...

OKAY, BOYS! PRY OPEN THE COFFIN!



IT...IT'S EMPTY! HE IS ALIVE!

IT CAN'T BE! I WOULDN'T BELIEVE IF I HADN'T SEEN IT WITH MY OWN EYES!



THAT NIGHT, JAMES COOPER AGAIN ROAMED THE CITY, BEING CAREFUL TO KEEP OUT OF SIGHT! HE WAS A GHASTLY THING TO SEE! HIS FLESH HAD ALMOST COMPLETELY DECAYED FROM HIS BODY!

WHILE THE GOPS ARE GUARDING THE JURORS, I'LL GET THE JUDGE THAT SENTENCED ME...



HIS HIDEOUS FACE PEERED INTO THE STUDY OF JUDGE WARREN HAWLEY...

GOOD! HE'S ALONE!



SLOWLY HE OPENED THE FRENCH DOORS AND ENTERED...

COOPER! GOOD LORD! WHAT... WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE...

I... I'VE COME TO... TO KILL YOU... JUDGE!



THE JUDGE SNATCHED A POKER FROM THE NEARBY FIREPLACE... AND AS COOPER ADVANCED TOWARD HIM...

KEEP AWAY, COOPER... KEEP AWAY! ALL RIGHT! YOU FORCE ME TO...

YAAAAAAH!



THE BLOW FROM THE HEAVY IRON POKER CAUGHT COOPER ACROSS THE FACE, AND THE REMAINING FLESH FELL AWAY!... THEN...

HE... HE COLLAPSED INTO A HEAP OF BONES... AND DECAYED ROT!



LATER, AFTER THE CORONER HAD EXAMINED COOPER'S REMAINS...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF IT, JUDGE! YOU SAY HE TALKED AND WALKED? ACCORDING TO MY TESTS, HE'S BEEN DEAD SINCE NOVEMBER 7TH!

DEAD? BUT, HE LIVED... I SAW HIM...



YES, JUDGE! COOPER LIVED! AT LEAST HE MOVED... AND TALKED! BUT HE WAS A LIVING CORPSE! AND HIS BODY CONTINUED TO DECAY, AS ALL DEAD BODIES DO! SOON, HE HAD DECAYED TO SUCH A POINT THAT EVEN THE 'LIFE' THAT THE POOR OLD PROFESSOR HAD GIVEN HIM SLIPPED AWAY! TOO BAD, THOUGH! HE WAS GETTING TO LOOK REAL PRETTY! DIDN'T YOU THINK SO? WELL... FOR MORE SPINE-TINGLING TALES,

READ ON... IF YOU DARE! JUST DON'T GO TO PIECES LIKE POOR OLD JIMMY!



THIS IS THE TALE OF TWO PEOPLE WHO VISITED AN AMUSEMENT PARK...AND WERE **NOT** AMUSED! I CALL IT..

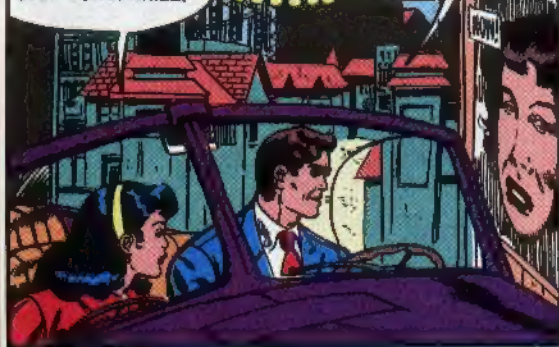
TERROR RIDE!



GEORGE AND RUTH HAD BEEN DRIVING FOR HOURS WHEN THEY SAW THE SIGN. . .

LOOK, GEORGE!
AN AMUSEMENT
PARK! LET'S
STOP FOR A WHILE!

OKAY, RUTH!
WE CAN TAKE IN
SOME **RIDES!**



THE COOL SEPTEMBER AIR STIRRED LAZILY AS THEY ENTERED THE SHABBY GATES AND WALKED DOWN THE MIDWAY. . .

OH, DEAR! THE
ROLLER COASTER
IS CLOSED UP!

LOOKS LIKE THE **WHOLE**
PLACE IS BOARDED
UP, RUTH! THE **SEASON'S**
OVER, YOU KNOW!



GEORGE AND RUTH STOOD ALONE
ON THE DESERTED MIDWAY...

GEE! I GUESS
WE MIGHT AS
WELL LEAVE!

YEAH!
TOO BAD!

SUDDENLY

WHAT'S *THAT*,
RUTH?

SOUNDS LIKE
WATER
SPLASHING!

OH LOOK,
GEORGE!
HOW QUANT!

AN *OLD MILL*
RIDE... WITH A
WATER-
WHEEL!

I'M GLAD AT LEAST *ONE*
RIDE IS OPEN! LET'S
TRY IT!

I... I DON'T KNOW, GEORGE!
IT'S ALWAYS SO *DARK*
IN THOSE THINGS...

MMM! WHAT BETTER
PLACE TO TAKE MY
NEW BRIDE THAN ON
A *DARK BOAT RIDE*!

OH, GEORGE!
STOP..

HOW
MANY,
PLEASE?

TWO! AREN'T VERY
BUSY, ARE YOU?

NO! NOT MANY PEOPLE COME
HERE THIS TIME OF YEAR!
ALL RIGHT! TAKE THE NEXT
BOAT!

COMFORTABLE,
HONEY?

SNUG AS
A BUG..

HAVE A PLEASANT
TRIP, FOLKS!

THE BOAT WITH GEORGE AND RUTH MOVED SLOWLY TOWARD THE YAWNING BLACK MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL...

THIS LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE **FUN**...

PLEASE, GEORGE! THE MAN WILL HEAR YOU...

AND THEN...

OOOHH! IT'S DARK!

...THE DARKER THE BETTER!

YOU'RE **FRESH**, GEORGE ARNOLD!

DID YOU FORGET WHO YOU JUST **MARRIED** TODAY, MRS. ARNOLD? NOW GIMME A...

SUDDENLY, A LIGHT FLASHES ON...

WHAT THE...?

OH, IT'S JUST ONE OF THOSE **WAX DISPLAYS** THEY HAVE IN THESE RIDES!

BUT... IT LOOKS... SO **REAL**!

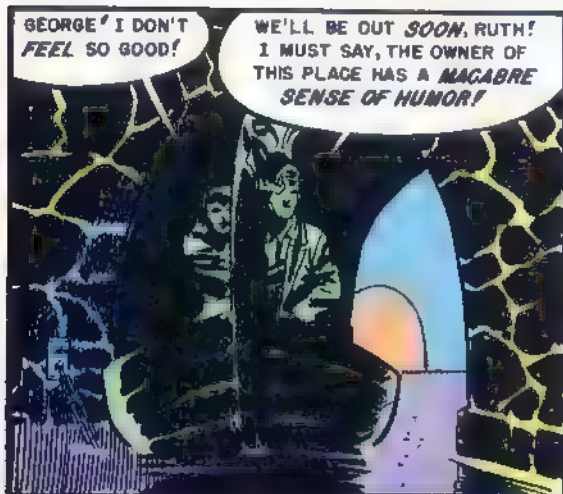
THE BOAT MOVES SLOWLY FORWARD, AND THE DISPLAY DARKENS AGAIN...

THOSE WAX FIGURES, WHEN THEY'RE DONE BY AN EXPERT, ALWAYS **DO** LOOK REAL! NOW, WHERE **WERE** WE?

YOU WERE ABOUT TO GIVE ME A...

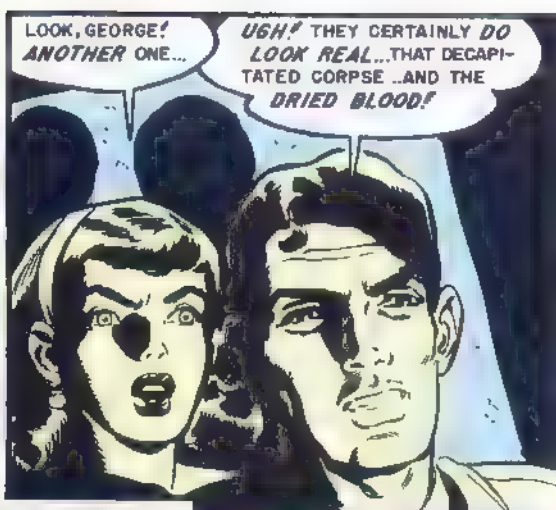
HOW **HORRIBLE**!

SAY! THIS ISN'T **FUNNY** ANY MORE! THESE DISPLAYS ARE... **REVOLTING**!



GEORGE! I DON'T
FEEL SO GOOD!

WE'LL BE OUT *SOON*, RUTH!
I MUST SAY, THE OWNER OF
THIS PLACE HAS A *MAGABRE*
SENSE OF HUMOR!



LOOK, GEORGE!
ANOTHER ONE...

UGH! THEY CERTAINLY *DO*
LOOK REAL...THAT DECAPI-
TATED CORPSE ...AND THE
DRIED BLOOD!



I'M CLOSING MY
EYES! I'M NOT
GOING TO LOOK
ANY MORE!

I DON'T *BLAME*
YOU! THEY'RE
ALL PRETTY
DISGUSTING!
WE...



WE...WE *HIT* SOMETHING!
THE BOAT...IT'S
STOPPED!

I'LL ...
SEE
WHAT
IT IS...



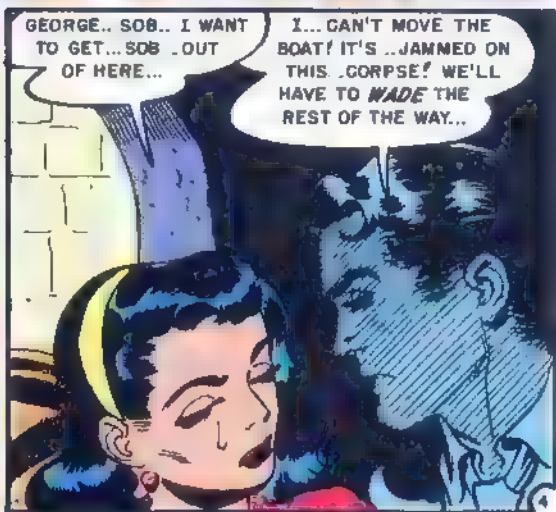
GEORGE MOVED TO THE FRONT OF
THE BOAT AND GROPED INTO THE
INKY BLACKNESS...

IT'S...SOMETHING *SOFT*...
IN THE WATER! I...
I'LL LIGHT MY
CIGARETTE LIGHTER...



GOOD LORD!

IT... IT'S A BODY!



GEORGE.. SOB.. I WANT
TO GET... SOB ...OUT
OF HERE...

I... CAN'T MOVE THE
BOAT! IT'S ...JAMMED ON
THIS ...CORPSE! WE'LL
HAVE TO *WADE* THE
REST OF THE WAY...

AS THE FRIGHTENED COUPLE
SPLASHED THROUGH THE BLACK
TUNNEL...

GREAT SCOTT! I JUST
THOUGHT OF SOME-
THING, RUTH!

WHAT?



THAT CORPSE WAS
REAL! MAYBE THE
DISPLAYS WERE
REAL TOO!

OH, NO...
NO!



ON THROUGH THE MURKY DARKNESS
THEY WADED...

WE'LL BE
OUT SOON!

I...GASP...I'M
TIRED! I'VE GOT
TO REST,
GEORGE!



HERE! HERE'S A
PLACE TO SIT
DOWN!

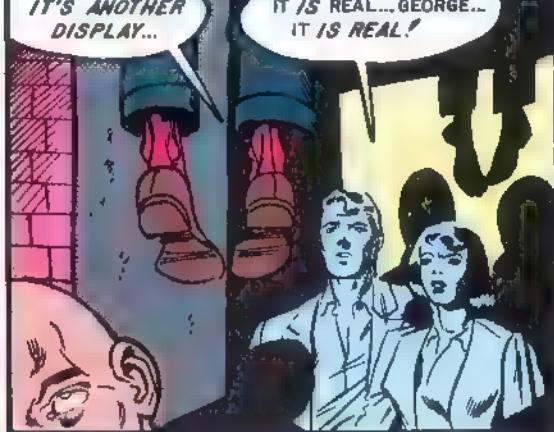
THANK GOODNESS!
I'M ABOUT READY
TO...



SUDDENLY, THE PLACE WHERE THEY HAVE STOPPED IS
FLOODED WITH LIGHT...

IT'S ANOTHER
DISPLAY...

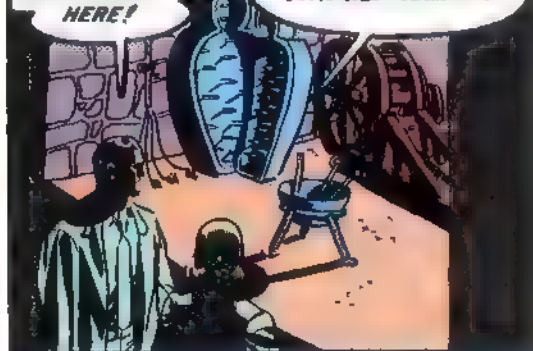
IT IS REAL...GEORGE...
IT IS REAL!



FEAR AND TERROR GLUTCHED AT THEIR HEARTS AS
GEORGE AND RUTH RUSHED FROM THE HORRIBLE
SCENE FURTHER INTO THE INKY GLOOM...

HERE! HERE'S AN
EMPTY DISPLAY!
YOU CAN REST
HERE!

IT LOOKS...LIKE
SOME KIND OF
TORTURE CHAMBER...



AS SOON AS YOU CATCH
YOUR BREATH, WE'LL
GET OUT OF HERE, RUTH!

THE OWNER... HE MUST
BE A **MADMAN!** A
HOMICIDAL MANIAC...





YOU DIDN'T LAUGH AT MY EXHIBITS, DID YOU?

GEORGE!
IT'S...
HIM!

LOOK AT HIS
EYES... HE
IS MAD!



ALL SUMMER THEY LAUGHED AT MY EXHIBITS. THE FOOLS! THEY SAID MY WAX DUMMYS DIDN'T LOOK REAL! NOW I CAN SHOW THEM! HEH-HEH...

RUTH, GET READY TO MAKE A BREAK FOR IT!

NO MORE WILL THEY LAUGH! NOW, MY EXHIBITS LOOK REAL! BECAUSE I USE REAL PEOPLE! AND THIS IS MY LAST DISPLAY... A MEDIEVAL TORTURE CHAMBER! THANKS TO YOU TWO... LIKE THE OTHERS WHO WANDERED INTO THE DESERTED AMUSEMENT PARK AND FOUND THIS RIDE...

...I WILL BE ABLE TO FINISH IT! THERE'S NO USE RUNNING... YOU CAN'T GET OUT! THE EXIT IS CLOSED... AND LOCKED!



RUN, RUTH!
RUN!

HAH-HAH!
I'LL GET YOU...
NEVER FEAR...



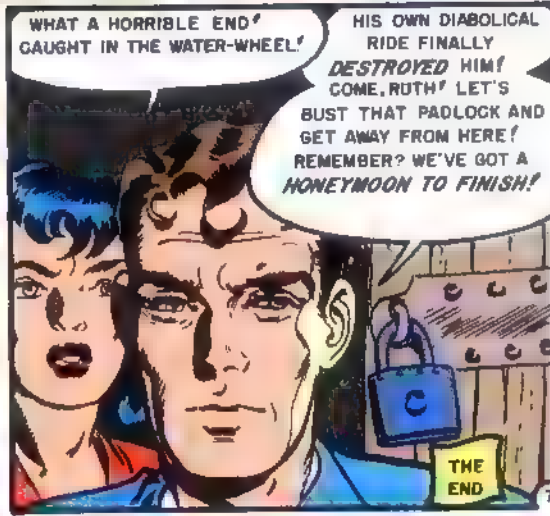
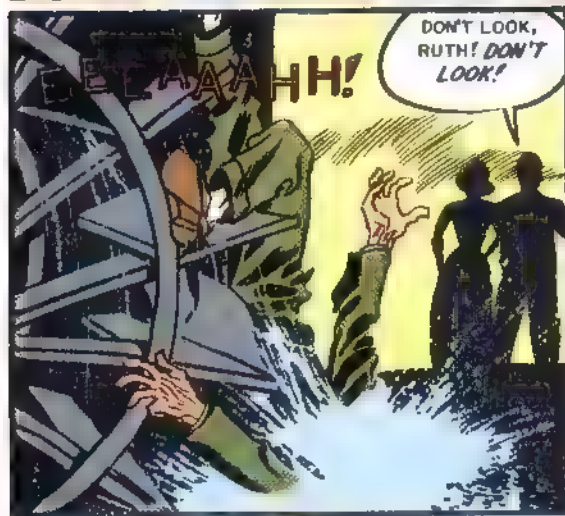
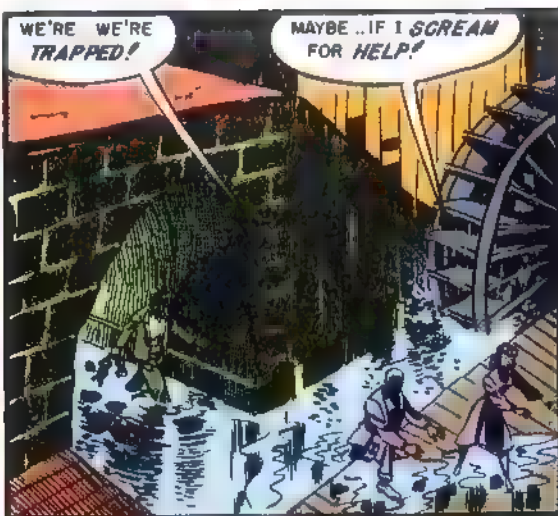
THOSE GASP... SHACKLES HE'S CARRYING... GASP! HE WANTS TO PUT US ON THAT STRETCH RACK! GASP!

GEORGE... HE'S
COMING AFTER
US...



THERE, GEORGE... THE
END OF THE TUNNEL...

AND THE EXIT.. IT
IS LOCKED!



IT WAS THE MOST UNUSUAL FRATERNITY INITIATION EVER SEEN ON THE CAMPUS. . . OR ON ANY OTHER CAMPUS, FOR THAT MATTER! THE THREE PLEDGEES WERE TAKEN OUT TO THE OLD PALMER HOME ON THAT INFAMOUS NIGHT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, AND INSTEAD OF THE PLACE BEING AMUSINGLY HAUNTED, IT TURNED INTO A---

HOUSE OF HORROR



IT WAS ON A NIGHT IN 1934 THAT THIS STRANGE TALE HAD ITS BEGINNING! TODAY, FIFTEEN YEARS LATER, THERE IS STILL NO EXPLANATION FOR WHAT HAPPENED AT THE PALMER PLACE!

GET A LOAD OF LES WILTON BACK THERE...SCARING THE WITS OUT OF THOSE POOR FRESHMEN!



HE'S GONE ABOUT PREPARING THIS HOUSE FOR THE INITIATION AS IF IT WERE THE CLOSING SECONDS OF THE BIG GAME!

HE CLAIMS THAT EVEN IF IT WAS JUST AN OLD DUMP BEFORE... IT'S HAUNTED NOW!



AND AS THE LAST STEP IN YOUR HAZING, BOYS... YOU'LL HAVE TO PASS THE TEST OF COURAGE! A LONELY JOURNEY INTO THE OLD PALMER PLACE WHICH LEGEND TELLS US IS HAUNTED!

EACH ONE OF YOU WILL FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS I GAVE ON THE RIDE OUT HERE! IF ANYONE WANTS TO DROP OUT NOW... LET HIM SPEAK UP OR SHUT HIS MOUTH FOREVER! EVERYONE READY...?

HERE'S YOUR LIGHT, HENDERSON. YOU MIGHT AS WELL START THE BALL ROLLING! AND REST ASSURED OF ONE THING, BOYS... THIS IS NO SCHOOLBOY PRANK... AS YOU'LL SOON LEARN! HEH, HEH!

Y-YES.. I-I GUESS SO.

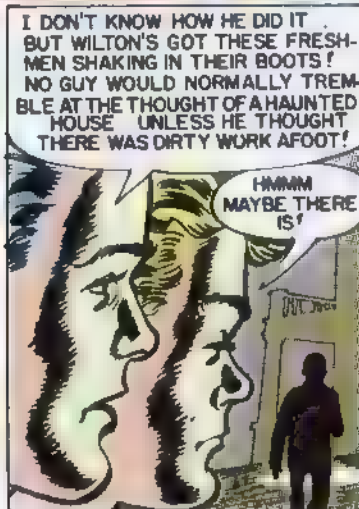
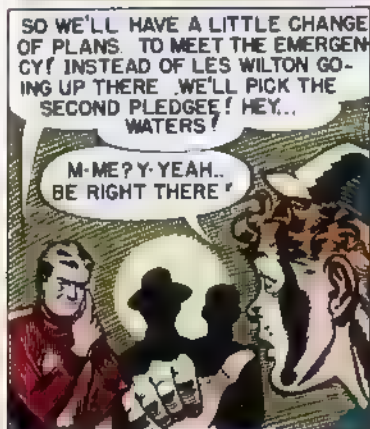
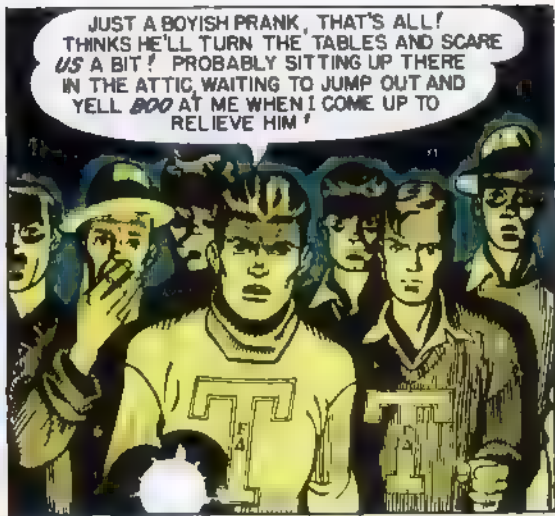
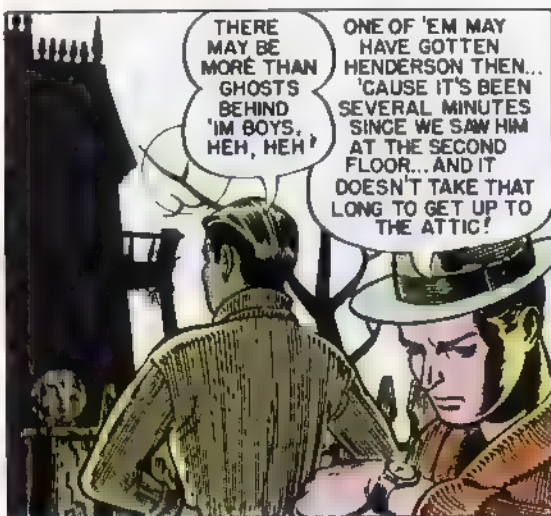
WAVE THAT LANTERN AT US FROM THE FIRST AND SECOND LANDINGS, HENDERSON AND JUST *code* YOUR HEELS IN THE ATTIC TILL I COME UP FOR YOU IF YOU'RE NOT ALREADY BATHED IN GOLD SWEAT, THAT IS!

YOU'RE DRIVING THESE FRESHMEN PRETTY HARD, LES... YOU MUST HAVE GIVEN THIS PUST QUITE A BUILD-UP BECAUSE THEY LOOKED SCARED TO DEATH! FROM THE LOOK IN HENDERSON'S EYE. HE'D KILL YOU IN A MINUTE IF HE HAD THE CHANCE!

T-THERE HE IS NOW... WAVING THAT LANTERN AT THE FIRST FLOOR WINDOW!

NOW THE FUN STARTS! I WENT THROUGH THAT PLACE LAST WEEK, RIGGED A FEW CONTRAPTIONS FOR THE BOYS TO TRIP OVER! OUGHT TO BE GOOD FOR SOME LAUGHS BEFORE THE EVENING'S OVER!

THERE HE IS AGAIN. POOR KID MUST HAVE RAN ALL THE WAY UP TO THE SECOND FLOOR AS IF THERE WAS A GHOST BEHIND 'IM!



YOU ARLING. C'MON OVER HERE!
YOU'RE NEXT, MAN... GO UP TO THAT
ATTIC AND TELL THOSE PALS OF
YOURS TO STOP THEIR MONKEY-
SHINES! THIS IS A FRATERNITY
INITIATION... NOT A SCHOOLBOY
PRANK!



I-I DON'T THINK I... YOU'LL GO ALL RIGHT...
OR THEY'LL FIND YOU
I C... CARE IN A DITCH! I DIDN'T
TO GO! RIG UP THIS PLACE
JUST TO HAVE A
COURLA PUNKS SPOIL
OUR FUN! IF THE
THREE OF YOU ARE
PLANNING TO GIVE
ME A SCARE... YOU'LL
REGRET IT!



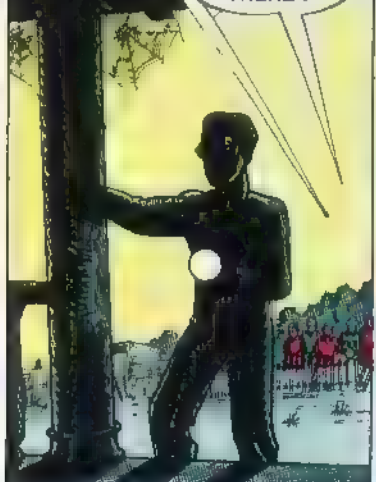
W WE DIDN'T PLAN ANY JOKES
LIKE T... THAT! AND I DON'T LIKE
THE LOOKS OF THIS... IT'S N...
NOT LIKE WATERS AND HENDER-
SON TO FOOL AROUND! B... BUT
I'LL GO!

SPOKEN LIKE A
REAL GAMMA
DELT-TO BE!



HEH, HEH! LOOK AT 'IM SHAKING!
BET THE OTHER TWO'LL HAVE
A BIG SURPRISE FOR ARLING...
THINKING IT'S THEIR BELOVED
LES WILTON!

MAYBE THE
KID'S RIGHT, LES
...MAYBE SOME-
THING *DID* GO
WRONG UP
THERE!



RATS! NOTHING'S WRONG UP
THERE... ARLING'S AT THE FIRST
FLOOR SAFE AND SOUND! FROM
THE LOOK ON HIS FACE HE MUST
HAVE STUMBLED OVER THAT
SKELETON I BORROWED FROM
THE LAB, TOO!



HE'S AT THE ON HIS WAY TO THE
SECOND ATTIC! HOLD YOUR
FLOOR... BREATH, BOYS...
HERE'S WHERE THE
REAL FUN BEGINS.
IN THE NEXT SIXTY
SECONDS.



FIVE MINUTES,
WILTON... AND
NO SIGN OF
ARLING! ALL
THREE OF 'EM...
GONE!

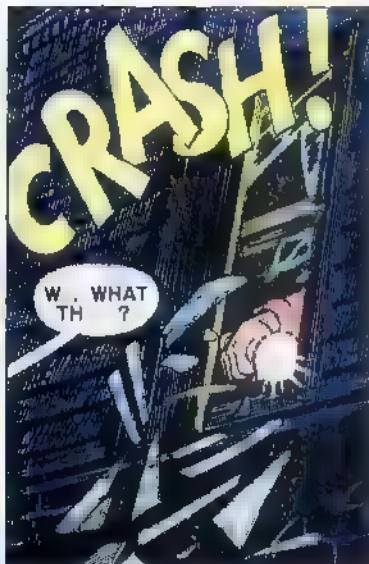
THE STUPID PUNKS... TOO YELLOW TO
TAKE THAT LAST FLIGHT OF STEPS!
I'LL SHOW 'EM *REAL* FEAR..



GIMME THAT LIGHT, JENKINS
I'LL GO UP THERE MYSELF! FIRST
TO PROVE TO ALL OF *YOU* THAT
THERE'S NO DANGER UP THERE...
AND SECOND, TO KICK THOSE GUYS
OUT OF THAT PLACE... AND OUT
OF THE GAMMA DELTA!



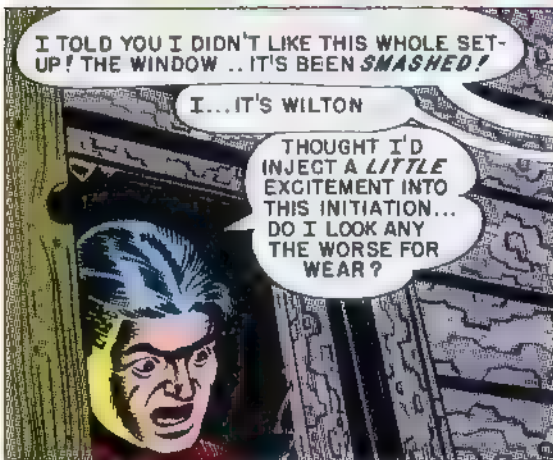
MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T HAVE
LET WILTON PLAN THIS WHOLE
INITIATION BY HIMSELF! HE'S
LIABLE TO GO OVERBOARD ON
THIS HAZING BUSINESS. THE
BOYS IN THAT HOUSE MAY HAVE
HURT THEMSELVES!



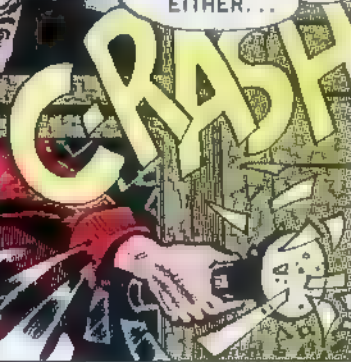
I TOLD YOU I DIDN'T LIKE THIS WHOLE SET-UP! THE WINDOW... IT'S BEEN *SMASHED*!

I...IT'S WILTON

THOUGHT I'D
INJECT A *LITTLE*
EXCITEMENT INTO
THIS INITIATION...
DO I LOOK ANY
THE WORSE FOR
WEAR?



NOTHING TO WORRY
ABOUT HERE ON
THE SECOND FLOOR
EITHER...



FIFTEEN
MINUTES
SINCE WE
SAW
WILTON!

T...THERE *IS*
SOMETHING WRONG
UP THERE?

THE SECONDS
TICKED BY
IN THAT
LONELY
AREA KNOWN
AS PALMER'S
PLACE...
SECONDS BE-
CAME MINUTES
... AND
THE MINUTES
STRETCHED
INTERMINABLY...



SOMETHING'S GOING ON IN
THAT HOUSE THAT WE DON'T
KNOW ABOUT! AND THE WAY
THOSE THREE FRESHMAN
HATED WILTON. THEY MAY
HAVE GIVEN HIM A BAD
BEATING!

I. I HOPE IT'S
ONLY *THAT*! LET'S
HURRY!



WE'LL COMB THIS PLACE UNTIL WE FIND ALL FOUR OF 'EM' MIKE... FRED. SEARCH EACH ROOM WITH A FINE-TOOTH COMB! WE'LL GET THIS THING STRAIGHTENED OUT IF IT TAKES THE REST OF THE NIGHT!

NOT A TRACE OF ANY-ONE IN THE FRONT ROOM

OR ANY OF THE OTHERS EITHER! THE DUST WASN'T EVEN DISTURBED!

AND OUTSIDE, NO FOOT-PRINTS! WHICH MEANS THEY'RE ALL STILL IN THE HOUSE!

NO ONE ON THE SECOND FLOOR EITHER! AND SINCE NO ONE COULD HAVE LEFT THE HOUSE... THEY MUST ALL BE UP THERE!

T...THE ATTIC!

T. THIS IS PROBABLY WILTON'S IDEA OF A JOKE... HAZING THE WHOLE BUNCH OF US! W WELL... HERE GOES...

T...THE DOOR...IT OPENS EASILY! AS IF SOME-ONE ELSE OPENED IT BEFORE WE D...DID!

G-GOOD HEAVENS!

I...IT'S WILTON! H...HE'S AGED FIFTY YEARS IN THE LAST FEW MINUTES... H...HIS HAIR... IT'S TURNED WHITE!

H...HE LOOKS AS IF HE'S GONE INSANE! LISTEN TO HIS MOANING!

WITHIN HALF-AN-HOUR THE POLICE HAD ARRIVED AT PALMER'S PLACE... AND A THOROUGH SEARCH OF THE PREMISES REVEALED ONE STARTLING FACT

NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS... NEVER EVEN HEARD OF ITS EQUAL! THAT WILTON KID... CAN'T GET A COHERENT WORD OUT OF HIM! HIS MIND... IT'S CRACKED... HE'S COMPLETELY INSANE! AND THE OTHERS... VANISHED!

AGAIN AND AGAIN THE POLICE SEARCHED THE BUILDING THE NEXT FEW DAYS BUT NO FURTHER INFORMATION WAS UNCOVERED...

AND THEN, ABOUT A WEEK AFTER THE NIGHT OF HORROR.

THERE SHE GOES... CONSIGNED TO FLAMES BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONER! AND WITH IT... THE LAST TRACE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO ARLING, WATERS AND HENDERSON!

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO IT HAPPENED. AND NO EXPLANATION HAS EVER BEEN FOUND AS TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE THREE FRESHMEN... OR WHAT AWFUL HORRORS LES WILTON SAW IN THE MOMENTS BEFORE HIS MIND CRUMBLING!

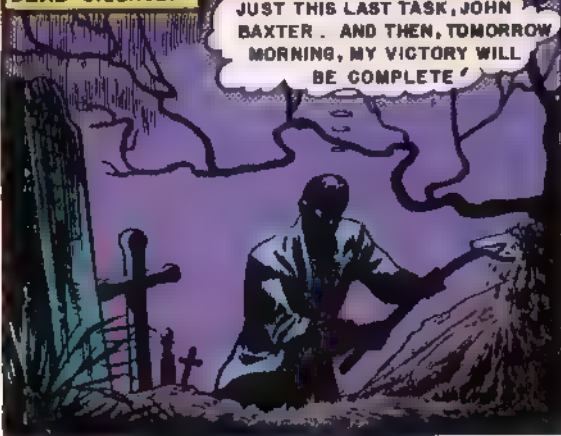
THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!



GREETINGS, DEAR READER! WE MEET AGAIN! REMEMBER ME? I AM **THE OLD WITCH!** IN EACH ISSUE OF THIS, THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAGAZINE, I BREW A **TERROR-TALE** HERE IN MY **CAULDRON!** THIS TIME, I HAVE COOKED UP A **CHILLER-DILLER!** I CALL IT...

DEATH SUITED HIM!

MY STORY BEGINS ON A BLACK NIGHT IN A DESERTED GRAVEYARD! THE SOUND OF DIGGING SHATTERS THE DEAD SILENCE.



JUST THIS LAST TASK, JOHN BAXTER. AND THEN, TOMORROW MORNING, MY VICTORY WILL BE COMPLETE!

WILDLY, THE DARK FIGURE SPADES THE SOFT EARTH... OPENING THE EVER-WIDENING BLACK HOLE...



A FEW MORE FEET AND I'LL REACH YOUR COFFIN, JOHN BAXTER... AND THAT **CURSED TUXEDO!** THEN... I'LL HAVE **EVERYTHING!**

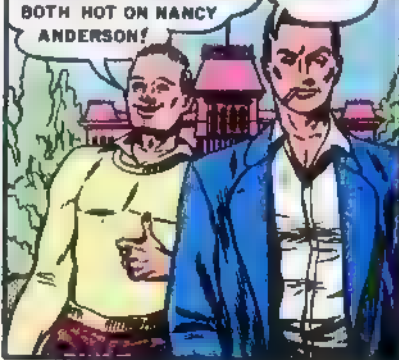
WHAT DOES THIS STRANGE FIGURE WHO DIGS AT GRAVES IN THE BLACK OF NIGHT WANT WITH BAXTER'S TUXEDO, YOU ASK? LET ME TELL YOU HIS STORY WHILE HE DIGS!



HIS NAME IS LAWRENCE CABOT! WE HAVE TO GO BACK INTO THE PAST...TO LAWRENCE CABOT'S COLLEGE DAYS...TO PICK UP HIS STORY!

HEY, CABOT! I HEAR YOU AND JOHN BAXTER ARE BOTH HOT ON NANCY ANDERSON!

CUT IT OUT, WILL YOU, DAVE?



YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO GO SOME TO GET *HER*, LARRY! BAXTER'S OLD MAN'S GOT DOUGH, YOU KNOW!

THAT'S JUST MY TROUBLE! I CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE HER OUT LIKE JOHN DOES!



THAT'S THE WAY IT WAS! JOHN BAXTER AND LAWRENCE CABOT WERE BOTH IN LOVE WITH THE SAME GIRL! JOHN WAS RICH...WHILE LARRY JUST MANAGED TO SCRAPE UP ENOUGH TO GET THROUGH COLLEGE...

ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR, LARRY, OL' BOY!

SURE, JOHN! SURE!

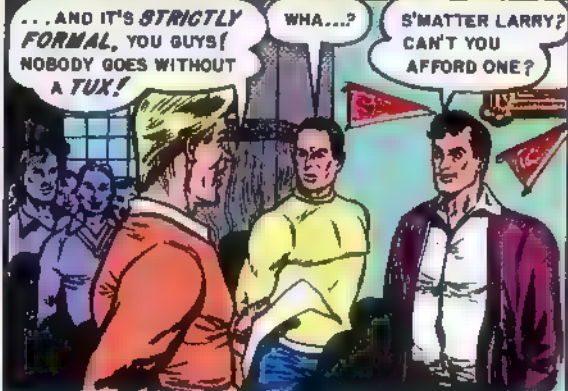


AND THEN THAT FATEFUL DAY ARRIVED! THE FRATERNITY THAT JOHN AND LARRY BELONGED TO WAS INVITED TO A GRADUATION DANCE, GIVEN BY NANCY ANDERSON'S SORORITY.

... AND IT'S *STRICTLY FORMAL*, YOU GUYS! NOBODY GOES WITHOUT A TUX!

WHA...?

S'MATTER LARRY? CAN'T YOU AFFORD ONE?



IT WAS A BAD BREAK FOR LARRY! JOHN *HAD* A TUXEDO, AND SO HE WENT TO THAT DANCE...WHILE LARRY STAYED BEHIND...

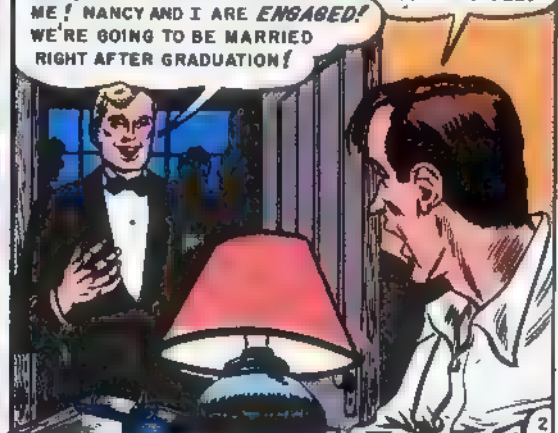
DARN IT! JUST MY LUCK! JOHNNY'LL PROBABLY MAKE TIME WITH NANCY TONIGHT!



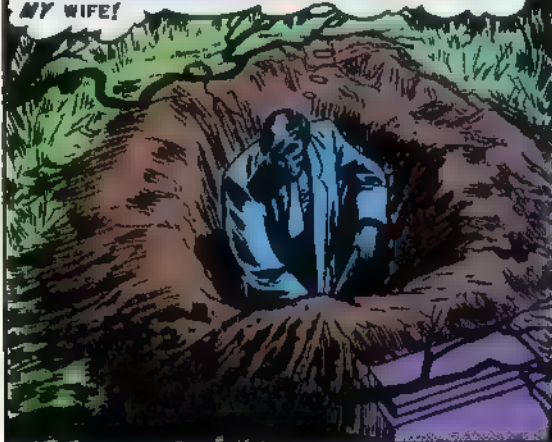
BUT WHEN THE BOYS RETURNED LATE THAT NIGHT...

HEY, LARRY! CONGRATULATE ME! NANCY AND I ARE *ENGAGED*! WE'RE GOING TO BE MARRIED RIGHT AFTER GRADUATION!

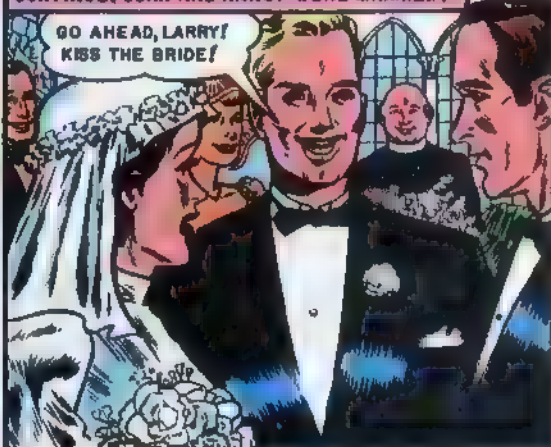
I... I... I SEE!



IF IT WASN'T FOR THAT *CURSED* *TUXEDO* OF YOURS, JOHN BAXTER, NANCY ANDERSON WOULD HAVE BEEN *MY* WIFE!



BUT...WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT, YOU ASK? LET ME CONTINUE! JOHN AND NANCY WERE MARRIED!



GO AHEAD, LARRY!
KISS THE BRIDE!

NANCY'S FATHER GAVE JOHN A GOOD POSITION IN HIS FIRM, AND JOHN WAS SET...

TAKE A LETTER,
MISS GLASS!

YES, MR.
BAXTER!



WHILE IN HIS SMALL OFFICE, LARRY STRUGGLED TO MAKE ENDS MEET...

DAY IN AND DAY OUT...WAITING FOR THAT PHONE TO RING! WAITING...WAITING! WILL I *EVER* BE A SUCCESS?



...AND BROODED...

I'D BE IN JOHN'S SHOES TODAY!
I'D HAVE *EVERYTHING* THAT HE HAS...



...AND THEN HE MADE HIS DECISION...

BUT I *CAN* HAVE NANCY... JOHN'S *JOB*... *MONEY*... *PRESTIGE*! I'LL TAKE THEM FROM HIM! THEY SHOULD BE MINE, ANYWAY! I'LL KILL HIM!

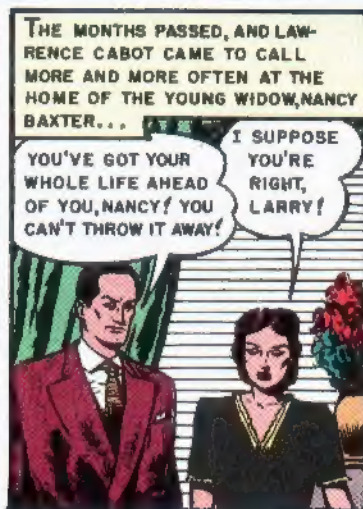
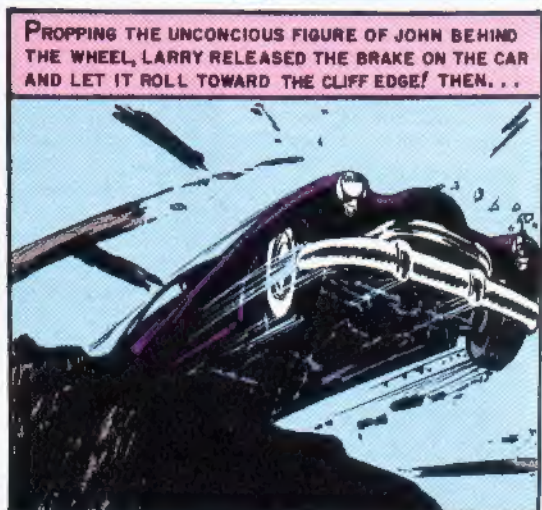
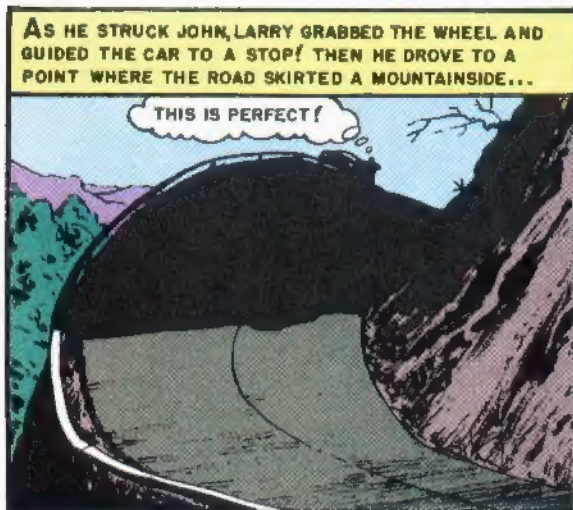
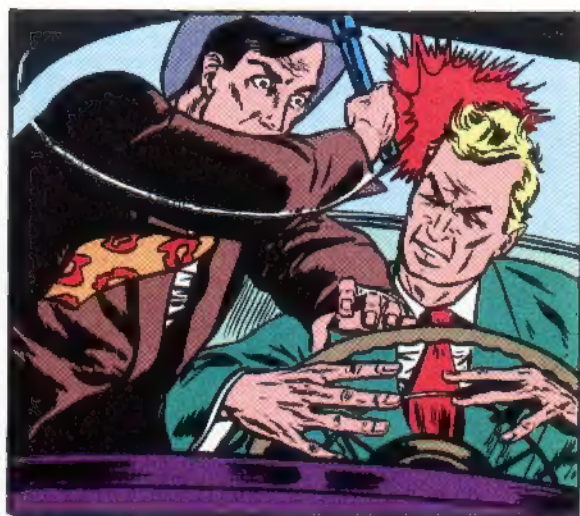


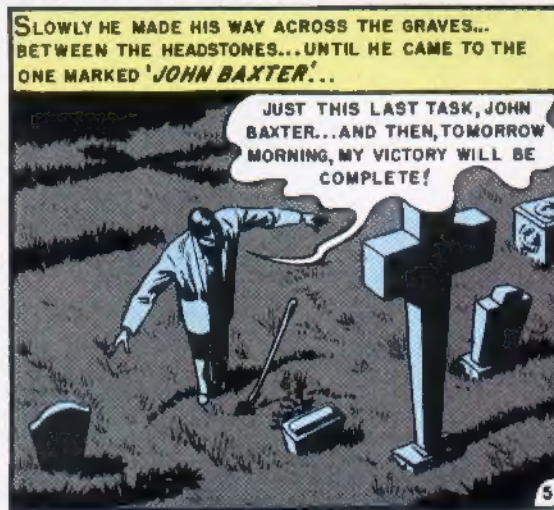
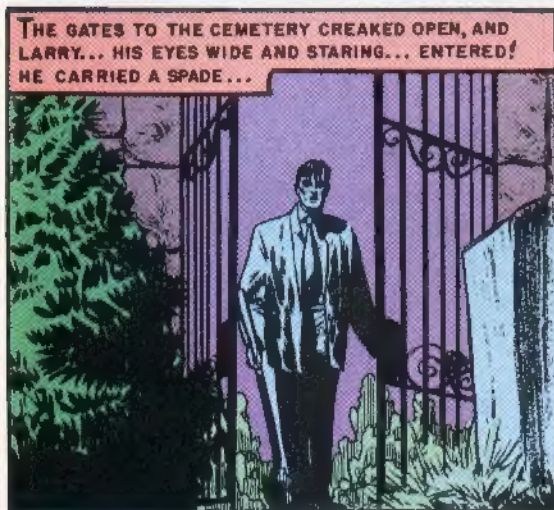
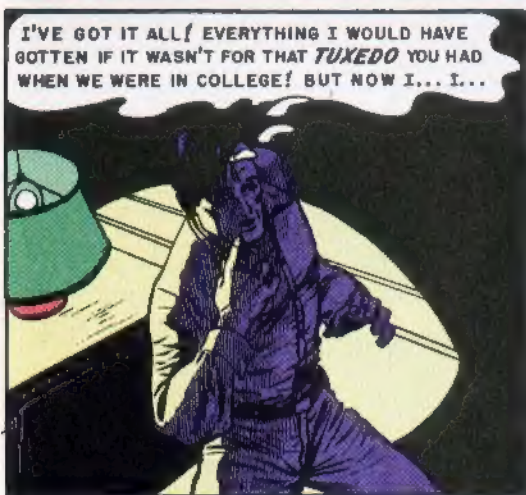
LARRY CABOT PLANNED IT VERY CAREFULLY... EVERY DETAIL! ONE NIGHT, ON A LONELY ROAD...

LARRY! I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE AT THE HOUSE FOR DINNER! WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?

MY CAR BROKE DOWN, JOHN! I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO COME ALONG!







AND THAT IS LAWRENCE CABOT'S STORY... SO FAR! WAIT! HEAR THAT HOLLOW BOOM? THE COFFIN! LET'S SEE WHAT HE'S UP TO...



HAH! NOW TO OPEN YOUR CASKET AND STRIP YOU OF YOUR LAST POSSESSION, JOHN BAXTER!



H-M-M-M! FOUR MONTHS IN THE GROUND HASN'T HARMED IT ANY! IT'S STILL IN GOOD CONDITION!



LARRY CABOT REMOVED THE *TUXEDO* FROM THE CORPSE OF JOHN BAXTER AND RE-COVERED THE GRAVE! THEN...

...AND NOW FOR SOME SLEEP! TOMORROW IS A BIG DAY!



YOU THINK HE'S *MAD*, DON'T YOU? WELL, YOU *MAY* BE RIGHT! IN ANY CASE, THE NEXT MORNING LARRY DRESSED IN JOHN'S TUXEDO...

YES, JOHN! IT FITS FINE! I FIT INTO EVERYTHING OF YOURS... *FINE!* HA-HA!



THE CHURCH WAS HOT! AND AS LARRY STOOD IN THE VESTRY, WAITING FOR THE CEREMONY TO BEGIN...

WHEW! IT'S CERTAINLY HOT IN HERE THIS MORNING! I...I...FEEL...STRANGE...



SOON THE FAMILIAR STRAINS OF THE WEDDING MARCH ECHOED THROUGH THE VAULTED ROOM...

IT...MUST BE MY...IMAGINATION...BUT I FEEL... AS THOUGH... THIS *SUIT*... WERE CRUSHING ME!



NANCY MADE HER APPEARANCE AND STARTED DOWN THE LONG AISLE...

H...HURRY! I...I...CAN'T BREATHE!
I...I DON'T...THINK I CAN...LAST
THROUGH...THE...CEREMONY!



LARRY'S BRAIN WAS REELING! EVERYTHING SWAM BEFORE HIM! AS HE STEPPED FORWARD...

CRUSHING...THE LIFE OUT...OF
ME...HOT...CAN'T BREATHE!

WE ARE GATHERED
TOGETHER TO
WITNESS THE...



THERE WERE FLASHES, NOW... THEN A DIZZINESS...

...LET HIM SPEAK NOW,
OR FOREVER HOLD
HIS PEACE...

JOHN... HE... HE'S
CRUSHING ME... KILLING
ME? I... I...

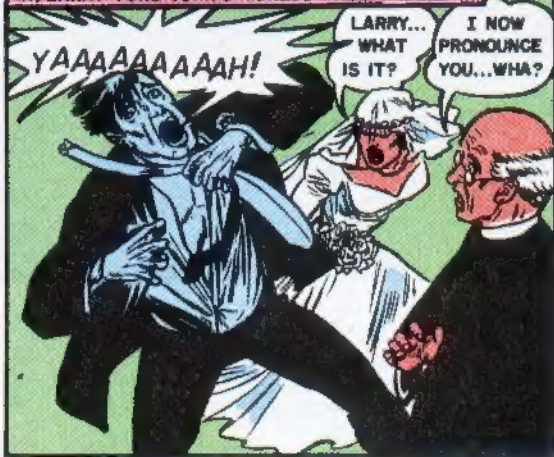


IN A LAST MAD FIT, BEFORE THE BLACKNESS CLOSED IN, LARRY TORE JOHN'S TUXEDO FROM HIMSELF...

YAAAAAAAAAAH!

LARRY...
WHAT
IS IT?

I NOW
PRONOUNCE
YOU... WHA?



THE GROUP THAT HAD COME TO WITNESS THE WEDDING WAS SHOCKED! SOMEONE RUSHED FORWARD TO EXAMINE THE PROSTRATE LARRY...

HE... HE'S DEAD! DEAD?



YES! HE WAS DEAD! AFTER A MEDICAL EXAMINATION WAS MADE...

STRANGE! THIS REPORT
SAYS THAT LARRY DIED
OF POISONING... FROM
EMBALMING FLUID!

EMBALMING FLUID?
BUT HOW
DID LARRY
EVER COME
IN CONTACT
WITH THAT?



HEH, HEH! WE KNOW HOW, DON'T WE, DEAR READER? WHEN LARRY GOT HOT UNDER THE COLLAR, HIS BODY ABSORBED THE EMBALMING FLUID WHICH HAD CONTAMINATED JOHN'S TUXEDO! AND NOW, LARRY REALLY HAS EVERYTHING THAT JOHN HAS! NO NANCY... NO JOB... NO PRESTIGE... NO NOTHING! JUST A NICE, COOL COFFIN IN A NICE, COOL GRAVE!

